



**Comfort
Keepers®**

17 Heronvue Road * Greenwich, CT 06831
Phone: (203) 629-5029 * Fax: (203) 622-8182
CT Reg. # DCP0000108

TESTIMONY 2/24/11 IN SUPPORT OF SB -911 AN ACT CONCERNING HOMEMAKER SERVICES AND HOMEMAKER-COMPANION AGENCIES

My name is Dennis Patouhas

I am the owner of Assisted Living Associates, the Greenwich franchisee of Comfort Keepers, a 600 office network of providers of non medical homecare

I am also a member of the NPDA

11 years ago, when my wife Marian and I were considering entering into the homecare industry, we choose a model that we felt was the high road approach to providing seniors and others in need of care with a service that allowed them to ONLY concern themselves with obtaining care. Not with dealing with becoming an employer, potentially becoming liable for employer related liability or un-withheld, unreported or unpaid income taxes on the part of their caregiver. Not dealing with risk of suit for injury to a caregiver in their direct employment as their homeowners insurance would be non responsive in such cases.

We also wanted to assemble a staff of caregivers who would be protected with workers compensation insurance in the event of employment related injury and unemployment insurance in the event the need arose. We also did not want our staff to be faced with the year end shock of having reported income with no taxes withheld.

I urge you to vote in favor of SB 911

We have encountered several elderly consumers or their families over the past 10 years who had experience with becoming the target of litigation over employment related injury for as much as \$50,000 or that family who became liable after several years of obtaining caregiving services for \$25,000 of taxes. This as they were deemed the employer although an agency was the entity arranging caregiving services.

Recently, addressing a group of seniors at a health fair in Wilton on the topic of what we term "becoming an accidental employer", one woman was accompanied by her care giver. As I proceeded, the caregiver became very engaged in the topic, asking numerous questions relating to her relationship with her agency. By the end of the talk, she came to the realization that she was not an employee of the agency as she had come to believe, was not covered by workers compensation, not entitled to unemployment insurance and if she worked to the ripe old age of retirement, would have contributed little if anything to social security.

SB 911 seeks to merely disclose to both the client and the caregiver as to their status as relates to their potential liability as employer or for exposure and lack of benefits afforded their employee counterparts in the case of the caregiver.

Again, I urge your vote for SB 911

Affordable, Non-Medical In-Home Services For The Elderly, New Mothers And Those Recovering From Illness

- Meal Preparation In-Home
- Grocery Shopping
- Laundry & Linen Washing
- Companionship Care
- Transportation Services
- Clothing Shopping
- Light Housekeeping
- 24 Hour Care Available
- Free In-Home Consultations
- Errand Services
- Daily "TLC" Phone Calls
- Recreational Activities